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A Formative Theory Evaluation of a Staff Reward and Recognition Programme

By

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A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the
 Degree of Master of Commerce in Monitoring
 and Programme Evaluation

Faculty of Commerce

University of Cape Town

2008

COMPULSORY DECLARATION:

This work has not been previously submitted in whole, or in part, for the award of any degree. It is my own work. Each significant contribution to, and quotation in, this dissertation from the work, or works of other people has been attributed, and has been cited and referenced.

Signature: Signed by candidate

Date: 24 - 04 - 09

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I sincerely wish to offer my thanks to:

Doctor Anton Schlechter, my supervisor, for his flexibility, understanding, guidance, feedback, and continuous support.

All my lecturers, Professor Joha Louw-Potgieter, Professor Johan Potgieter, Associate Professor Burger Van Lil, Doctor Suki Goodman, Ms Joanne Uphill and Professor Fanie Cloete. Your platform to learn and discuss has helped tremendously.

The HRD facilitator in the mentioned retail organisation, for granting me access to the programme, assistance, and her time.

The ten employees who graciously allowed me to interview them.

Thank you to you all.

ABSTRACT

This formative theory evaluation investigated the feasibility of the programme theory underlying a staff reward and recognition intervention within a retail setting. It contained academic literature which discussed the effects of reward and recognition programmes on motivation and turnover. In addition, best practice guidelines for motivational reward and recognition programmes were used as measure of comparison against the programme's theory. The evaluation questions contained in this dissertation covered various programme evaluation elements and assisted in evaluating the programme's theory. This was followed by common thematic extraction from interviews held with two streams of data providers. The results and discussion reported on the emerging themes and suggested basic closing thoughts in answer to each evaluation question. Limitations addressed the areas that constrained the evaluation, in terms of confidentiality, time, access, limited research sample and limited engagement. The recommendations in this formative evaluation study suggested options for improvement in order to best leverage the programme for future use, such as reviewing the theory, conducting a needs analysis, understanding what motivates different people, conducting a pilot intervention, gaining consensus about goals and objectives, conducting an implementation evaluation, encouraging a supportive culture, stipulating performance indicators, implementing a monitoring and evaluation system, and finally, outsourcing a professional programme designer. It can be concluded that the programme did not meet most of the best practice guidelines for motivational reward and recognition schemes and the interviews yielded results that were at odds with the intended programme theory, goals and objectives. Furthermore, this evaluation study contributed to a limited range of theoretical evaluations of employee reward programmes.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

The practice of programme evaluation can be used to focus on a variety of programme features, such as: identifying the problems associated with a programme, conducting a needs analysis, evaluating the design and structure of a programme, determining whether the programme was implemented as intended, evaluating whether the intended goals and objectives were achieved, or finally, determining the impact of the programme (Rossi, Lipsey & Freeman, 2004). The programme evaluated in this paper is a staff recognition and reward programme implemented by one of the leading fashion retailers in South Africa. A theory evaluation will be conducted, which will be defined and explored in greater detail.

This chapter discusses the evaluation, built on the features briefly discussed above. It will also discuss four central components, namely: reward and recognition schemes as tools to increase motivation and reduce turnover; highlight the standard for general reward and recognition schemes; describe and explore the reward and recognition programme being evaluated in this paper; and finally, provide a list of theory evaluation questions which will guide this evaluation to completion.

A Logic Model

Evaluators such as Chen (2005), and Rossi et al (2004) have in recent years expounded on the merits of defining evaluations and developing guidelines which will assist in differentiating one evaluation study from another. The logic model (see Figure 1 below) is such a framework and assists in organizing the logic underlying a programme or intervention. Using this framework allows one to delineate the most complex of programmes into their most essential components.

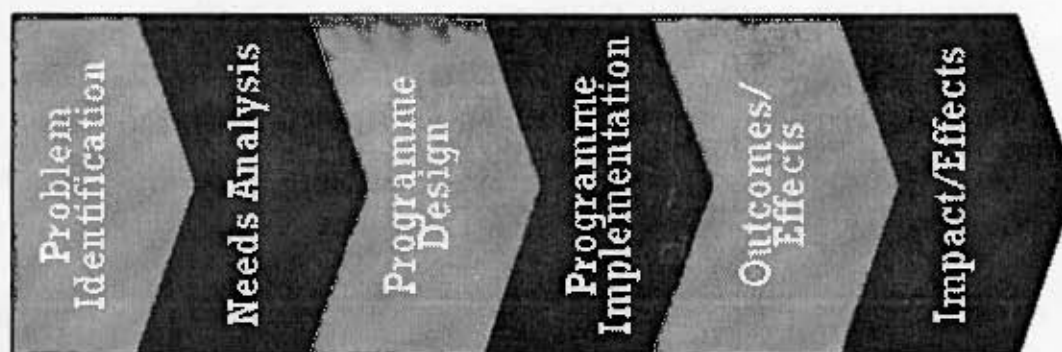


Figure 1. Logic Model of Programme Evaluation

In terms of the logic model presented above, a theory evaluation can either focus on one specific element or alternatively, encompass an evaluation of the theory across the various elements proposed in the model. This evaluation falls into the latter category, suggesting therefore that the conceptualization of the programme would be the primary focus of the research. This relates to the research done by Chen (2005), who postulates that theory assessments are both descriptive and prescriptive in nature. While the former suggests that theory evaluations uncover causal processes within the design, the latter proposes that the programme's composition, such as its elements and activities should also be evaluated.

Chen's (2005) research also appears to be congruent with Argyris's (1977) perspective that theory assessments are built around 'theories of action' (as cited in Smith, 2001). In practice this suggests that programme planning, design and theory propose causal links between inputs, activities and desired outcomes (Friedman, 2001).

The study employs an inductive approach as it allows for the exploration of theories generated from actual programme activities and intended outcomes (Patton, 1997). According to Patton, this affords a high degree of relevance to the programme and encourages a practical application of theory as it is grounded in 'real world practice'.

In essence, according to Chen (2005) and Friedman (2001), theory evaluation, attempts to uncover the conceptualization underlying programmes (i.e. how they are designed, how they work and how effective their underlying theory or design is). In

this particular instance, it will also focus on measuring the underlying theory against the generally accepted standard.

The evaluation is formative in nature, suggesting that findings will be used for future programme improvement and unlike other evaluations, may not necessarily only be done upon completion of the programme (Trochim, 2006). This particular evaluation is in fact being conducted during programme implementation, whilst assessing its theory.

Reward and Recognition Schemes as Tools to Increase Motivation and Reduce Turnover

Increasing Motivation

According to Armstrong (2002), motivation refers to the factors which influence individuals to behave in a certain way and usually comprise three main elements, namely: direction, effort and persistence.

In considering the relationship between reward and motivation, the Expectancy Theory model (Vroom, 1964 as cited in Zachary & Kuzuhara, 2005) is introduced. According to the theory, employees tend to be motivated to perform when they receive rewards in exchange for doing their jobs (Zachary & Kuzuhara). However, Expectancy Theory also postulates that these rewards need to be valued by the individual in order to be effective, as different people are motivated by different rewards (Armstrong, 2002).

Keeping this premise in mind, literature suggests that there are two kinds of motivation, namely: intrinsic and extrinsic motivation (Armstrong, 2002). The former refers to the "...inherent tendency to seek out novelty and challenges, to extend and exercise one's capacities, to explore, and to learn" (Ryan & Deci, 2000, p.70). In other words, individuals are motivated to perform based on self-generated feelings or factors, such as pride, ownership, self-actualisation, the desire to grow and develop, and so forth. Extrinsic motivation has alternatively been defined as "...what is done to or for people to motivate them" (Armstrong, 2002, p.56). This can include rewards

such as increased pay, praise or promotion, as well as punishments, such as disciplinary action, withholding pay, or criticism.

In order to positively impact performance, it is important to note that both types of motivation have a significantly different effect. While the former operates by employees motivating themselves to improve their own performance; the latter reinforces performance by expecting their achievements to be recognized and rewarded (Jensen, McMullen & Stark, 2007). For the purpose of this paper, the relationship between extrinsic rewards and motivation will be explored further, as reward and recognition schemes in this instance are an example of extrinsic motivators.

There is a vast amount of research on the effects of rewards on motivation and while some theorists propose that rewards may have a detrimental effect on motivation (Applebaum, 1993; Deci & Ryan, 1985; Kohn, 1993), there are others who advocate the use of rewards as effective tools to positively manipulate motivation (Cameron & Pierce, 1996; Eisenberger & Cameron, 1996; Nelson, 1998; Platten, 1996).

A central theme in the discussion about reward and recognition programmes is that they do indeed promote effort and performance and may serve as positive reinforcers for desired behaviour, provided they are used correctly and in the appropriate contexts (Benabou & Tirole, 2003; McAdams, 1993).

Although this controversial relationship between reward and recognition schemes and extrinsic and intrinsic motivation does exist, research suggests that if the scheme is designed in such a way that it conveys the message that employees have truly excelled, the scheme would have a two-fold advantage. Firstly, it would serve to solidify and reinforce the employee's perception of his/her competence and secondly, it would positively impact on the employee's intrinsic motivation (Tarver & Godkin, 2005).

Incentive plans are also considered as able to encourage motivation and foster organisational effectiveness by influencing behaviour (Baker, 1993). He suggests that organisations reward desired behaviours, thus reinforcing particular outcomes and

goals, which may be strategically aligned to the organisation's vision and mission. For example, should the organisation value teamwork, the reward and recognition scheme should be designed in such a way that outstanding teamwork is rewarded and therefore positively reinforced.

The underlying premise therefore is that while rewards may indeed be used to positively increase motivation, in order to sustain those levels of motivation and engagement, successful reward and recognition schemes need to incorporate elements of both extrinsic as well as intrinsic motivating factors (Amabile, 1993). Literature reinforces this concept, as in a comparison between intrinsic rewards and extrinsic organisational rewards, the former showed a stronger relationship with motivation and job satisfaction in upper-level occupations, while the latter showed a significant correlation to motivation and job satisfaction in lower-level occupations (Mottaz, 1985). Using this information, it is possible then that reward and recognition schemes which incorporate elements of both reward types will be able to positively influence motivation across all levels of occupations.

Reducing Turnover

Reward and recognition schemes have also been acknowledged for their use in reducing turnover. Directly linked to turnover is the concept of job commitment, which has been defined as "...the likelihood that an individual will stick with a job, and feel psychologically attached to it" (Rusbult & Farrell, 1983, p.430). Research suggests that job commitment increases with an increase in job rewards and reduces turnover, albeit not in isolation. In addition, rewards appear to impact job commitment from the start of the employment contract, suggesting that reward schemes may have a significant effect on the job commitment of employees as early on as the hiring phase (Rusbult & Farrell). This may affect employees' initial levels of engagement and therefore, need to be carefully considered during the design of the programme.

Harrison, Virick and William (1996) found that reward and recognition schemes produce greater job satisfaction, which reduces the desire to consider alternate employment, thereby reducing turnover. However, they argue that the degree of reward contingency affects the performance-turnover relationship, suggesting that in order to reduce turnover, schemes should be designed in such a way that rewards are

not maximally contingent but rather linked to a combination of reward and recognition (Harrison et al).

Rewarding and recognizing performance also has a positive impact on turnover in the long term, in the sense that reward and recognition schemes strengthen the incentive to retain excellent performers, while generating the incentive for weak performers to leave (Bishop, 1986). Although this may be seen as contributing to turnover, it simultaneously enables organisations to retain outstanding employees, while filtering out the least productive.

Research appears to concur therefore that reward and recognition schemes may be used as tools to reduce turnover, however that they should be designed in collaboration with an intrinsic element and that they should be reviewed constantly throughout the employment contract in order to sustain performance.

Opposing Perspectives

In conducting a theory evaluation, it is appropriate to consider the various distinguishable perspectives regarding reward and recognition schemes. As noted previously, there are many critics who disparage the effects of such programmes on motivation and job commitment and these views should be considered as relevant to the discussion about the underlying programme theory.

One such critic is Kohn (1993), who has provided a detailed analysis of why reward and recognition schemes cannot be relied upon to motivate employees or improve performance. He suggests that these types of incentive programmes secure only temporary compliance and cannot guarantee long term results. He argues that money does not necessarily motivate, as suggested by Herzberg's (1959) research on motivating factors in organisations (as cited in Kohn, 1993). Studies have in fact determined that in a comparison of motivating factors, money did not rate very highly (Accel, 2008). Instead, the following factors seemed to motivate employees to perform at their peak, namely: whether there was potential to grow in the company; the kind of work they were doing, in terms of fulfillment, reasonable expectations,

challenge; and whether they were proud of the organisation to which they belonged (Accel).

A second criticism is that rewards are often viewed as punishment because of their manipulative nature (Deci & Ryan, 1985; Kohn, 1993). It may adversely affect motivation in that not receiving a reward would seem demoralizing and create tension and unhappiness in employees. In addition, reward and recognition based programmes, if not implemented properly, could discourage the idea of teamwork and group participation, because of the individualistic need it reinforces to gain rewards for performance (Kohn).

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, literature suggests that reward and recognition schemes undermine the idea of intrinsic motivation (Kohn, 1993). Rewards are typically seen as a poor substitute for genuine feelings of accomplishment and satisfaction and may even discourage employees from expressing real interest in their jobs. Denning (2001) suggests that these programmes negatively impact motivation because it encourages expectations, creating a culture where employees expect to be rewarded for behaviour and performance that is considered as basic requisites under normal circumstances.

Throughout the debate about the effects of reward and recognition on motivation, various meta-analyses have been conducted to investigate this assumed causal relationship. From Rummel and Feinberg (1988), through to Wiersma (1992) and Tang and Hall (1995), (as cited in Deci, Koestner & Ryan, 1999), noteworthy results have indicated that rewarding performance with extrinsic rewards does indeed lower motivation, due to the perceived controlling and competence elements of individuals.

However, literature also suggests that there are still other critics, who while they agree with Kohn (1993) that incentive programmes are counterproductive, also maintain that in certain industries, such as trade, the failure to reward performance will undoubtedly result in organisations losing their best employees (Beer, 1993). This critic reinforces that incentive programmes encourage self – interest while they discourage organisational commitment. His suggestion therefore, is to pay employees equally, while rewarding the top bracket of performers for their performance. This, he

states, will allow the organisation to identify poor performers and recognize the remainder of employees through other means of reward and recognition.

Linked to the opposing perspective, there are those who express a neutral approach to reward and recognition programmes (Amabile, 1993; Baker, 1993). These individuals recognize that there are both advantages as well as disadvantages associated with incentive programmes, but at the same time are unwilling to take a solid stance to either advocate or reject the idea of rewards based programmes.

Amabile (1993) states that while incentive programmes stifle real commitment, it is important to define the meaning of rewards. She claims that when the reward is perceived as being able to provide the individual with new possibilities, it may lead to an increase in creativity. In addition, while rewards may undermine intrinsic motivation, it is reasonable to accept that tangible rewards do not always necessarily have a negative impact on performance. Depending on the individual's psychological frame of mind, it is possible that he/she may be motivated by tangible rewards as well as an intrinsic interest or satisfaction in their work (Amabile).

Baker (1993) also agrees that there are many associated side effects to incentive programmes. However, he emphasizes that managers need to learn how to use and maximize incentives as they can become a powerful force in driving individual motivation and organisational effectiveness. He therefore reinforces the idea that before rewards based programmes are implemented, they need to be well designed and planned in order to avoid imminent failure (Baker).

It would seem then that successfully designed and implemented rewards based programmes may offer organisations various benefits, in terms of improved staff retention, improved organisational and individual employee effectiveness as well as employee loyalty. However, they are also considered to be manipulative tools which cannot guarantee long term goals and discourage organisational commitment. Thus, alternative approaches, such as work process reorganisation, the need for training and the use of promotions have been identified as substitutes for rewards based programmes.

A Standard for Reward and Recognition Schemes

Considering the wealth of information available which discusses the merits and disadvantages of reward and recognition schemes, one key point has been agreed on: incentives increase performance in the short term (Bowen, 2000). With this concept in mind, this section will investigate the best practices and standards to ensure the design and implementation of a motivational reward and recognition scheme.

Understanding motivation requires an understanding of rewards. Intrinsic motivation is internalized by the individual, while external motivation is dependent on expectations, as discussed previously. Rewards can be used as motivating factors provided they are aligned with certain guidelines.

The first of these guidelines is as follows: employees respond to incentives out of a sense of personal choice. In other words, employees need to value the reward being offered. Understanding that different factors motivate different people is a key element to mastering this first best practice (Morrall, 1996). As postulated by Maslow (1943), individuals base their choices on either a perceived or actual need (as cited in Bowen, 2000). Maslow's theory, the Hierarchy of Needs, which is illustrated in Figure 2, encompasses a broad range of needs that need to be satisfied. Understanding therefore that different employees may have different needs, as postulated by this hierarchy, will result in the design of a scheme which effectively motivates people to perform by tailoring needs to suit different individuals.



Figure 2: Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

Source: Based on Maslow, A. (1943). A theory of human motivation. *Psychological Review*, 50(4), pp.370-396.

Tied to this practice is the idea that successful reward and recognition schemes are those who incorporate both extrinsic as well as intrinsic motivators to positively influence employees to perform (Bowen, 2000). This is congruent with Maslow's theory because it highlights the notion that while certain employees may value a higher base pay, others may be motivated by feedback and the opportunity to grow and develop themselves.

A second guideline is creating a supportive organisational culture. Although it may seem a 'soft' topic, organisational culture influences processes, processes affect motivation, and motivation influences performance (Landy & Conte, 2004). Culture is reflected in the reward and recognition schemes designed by organisations. For example, a performance culture reinforces the idea that rewards are contingent upon excellent performance and employees are geared towards this kind of mental attitude. Alternatively, if an organisation's focus is on customer service, it makes sense that an organisation who employs a supportive culture, where teamwork, consideration and regard for colleagues are top priorities, will rate as better customer service providers in comparison to the former organisation who value performance above customer service (Bowen, 2000).

Thirdly, successful reward and recognition schemes also need to be aligned with corporate objectives (Benardin, 2003; Bowen, 2000). Schemes should be designed in such a way that performance measures are compatible with strategic goals for the long and short term. Ultimately, this will result in return on investment for the organisation, as their investment in rewarding their people results in performance, which in turn should result in profit. Hence, successful schemes need to be carefully vetted before they are implemented, in terms of conducting a cost-benefit analysis, to ensure that they are appropriately aligned to the organisation's goals (Benardin; DeWitt, 2001).

Fourthly, measurable performance also contributes to successful schemes (Benardin, 2003). Employees need to be able to understand how they are being assessed and these indicators are compelled to be fair and consistent. Regardless of performance levels, performance indicators should be standardized, clear and unambiguous, and

relevant to every person participating in the reward and recognition scheme (Zenger, 1992).

Fifthly, according to the Expectancy Theory (1964), another prerequisite for successful schemes is the idea that employees must believe that an increase in performance will lead to a valued reward (Benardin, 2003; Zachary & Kuzuhara, 2005). Should this element, which is represented in Figure 3 below, be present, employees will be motivated to perform, with the understanding that performance will be rewarded.

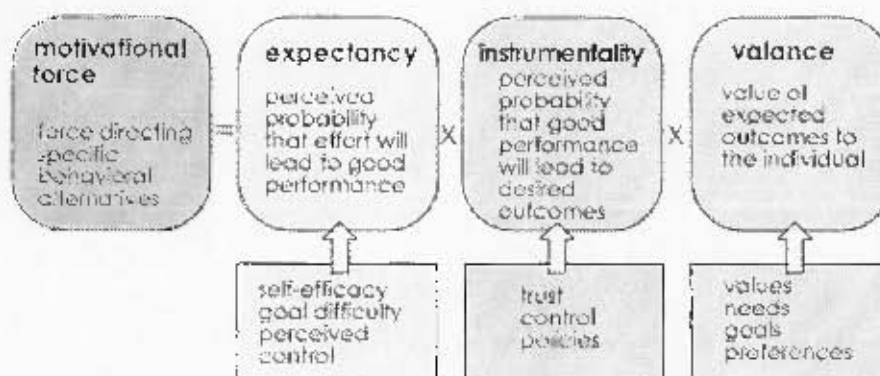


Figure 3: Dimensions of Expectancy Theory (1964)

Source: The Institute for Working Futures. (2005).

Sixthly, is the setting of goals (Jensen et al, 2007). In order for reward and recognition schemes to be effective motivators, employees need to know what they are striving towards. This is congruent with the definition of motivation, which posits direction as a key element, as defined above. According to the authors, goals in and of themselves need to meet certain criteria, namely: they must be focused, reasonable, measurable, achievable, challenging, provide feedback, participatory and neutral (Jensen et al). If these conditions are met, employees will have greater understanding, clarity and motivation to achieve what is expected of them.

A Description of the Programme as Intended

Nature of the Programme

The intervention is a staff reward and recognition programme which is based on a point system, rewarding employees for outstanding performance. The intervention is a

six month programme which runs annually, has been implemented nationally and is supposedly conceptualized according to reward and recognition principles. Consequently, the top twenty five employees who have earned the most points are rewarded and recognized for their efforts with certain prizes. The various elements which best describe the programme will be discussed below.

Goals and Objectives

The programme's goals attempt, to 'raise the bar' in terms of on-the-job performance. It was designed by the organisation's CEO, the HR manager and the marketing department to motivate staff by recognizing their individual effort and performance.

The organisation also divided their goals and objectives according to short and long term outcomes. In terms of the former, the programme was expected to achieve a more narrowed focus on providing outstanding customer service and motivating staff to drive their own development. In addition, the programme was also expected to achieve and maintain a high level of employee retention.

As a long term goal, the programme seeks to sustain motivation levels and encourage employees to outperform their job descriptions. This is believed to ultimately result in return on investment for the organisation, as motivated staff who excel in customer service lead to satisfied customers, which leads to greater profit for the company.

Location, Setting and History

The organisation is a reputable leader in the retail fashion industry. It has implemented the staff recognition programme across all its 400 stores over the past 5 years. This year the programme will be running in its fifth phase. The umbrella organisation owns four brand retailers, each of which are divided up into their respective branches. These are located nationally and are steadily becoming groomed for international exposure. While the programme is slightly altered each year, the changes are not significant. The intervention is discussed and developed in the first half of the year and is launched officially in July.

Needs Analysis

While no formal needs analysis as such was communicated for implementing the programme, the intervention attempted to address the following question, “What can we as the organisation do better to let our people know we recognize their effort?” Therefore, while the instrumental need could be considered as motivation; there is no evidence to highlight what the performance need was. The former refers to the need for an intervention, while the latter refers to the underlying need or problem being experienced (Rossi et al, 2004).

The organisation considers the intervention as a bonus to their employees and the programme is thus seen as a means of recognition and reward for employees who excel at their jobs; not necessarily as a sufficient means for compelling excellent performance.

Stakeholders

There are three sets of stakeholders related to this staff recognition programme. The first direct group is the employees as they have a vested interest in the programme in terms of being motivated to achieve the rewards promised. The second group is the customers, as improved levels of motivation imply improved customer service and thus they too would be indirectly benefiting from the intervention. The final group comprises stakeholders with both a financial and human resource vested interest in the programme, such as the organisation themselves as well as their shareholders. Improved customer service implies greater profit for the company and an improved reputation as an excellent retailer. Consequently, it is proposed that this reputation will lead to an increase in share prices and return on investment for stakeholders.

Target Population

The programme is compulsory and is aimed at all employees at a store level, within the organisation. This includes store managers, supervisors and staff at all branches. Because the organisation also owns various other fashion retailers, as mentioned above, the intervention runs across all these retailers, nationwide.

The Points System

A meeting is held annually in June, where the guidelines for the programme are discussed and transferred to area and store managers, who in return are required to launch the programme and transfer this knowledge to their subordinate staff. Each store receives a budget for their launch and management may decide on how best to allocate this resource. Previously, launch breakfasts were organized, canteens were decorated in that year's theme and colour, or a morning of discussion, activities and games would be organized.

Each store then receives a work chart with the names of the employees working in that particular store. The chart is used to monitor and map out the points awarded to employees for the remainder of that year, which is tallied in December. Points are also monitored on the organisational database.

Every month each store is awarded a certain number of points, according to particular measures such as their store's turnover, customer feedback and the number of new accounts opened. These points are then divided equally among each staff member in that store and added to the points on the chart. Thus, the store receives the credit as a team. The amount of points awarded for particular measures are not shared with management or staff but rather, are decided at a Head Office level.

In terms of turnover, points are awarded when stores reach a certain percentage of their target each month. The particular percentage was not made known for evaluation. In order to measure customer feedback and service, a randomly selected group of customers who purchased at a particular store in that month would be called up and asked to rate the service provided to them. Based on this information, points would then be allocated accordingly. Finally, the number of new accounts opened would also be rewarded in comparison to the number of new accounts opened in the previous year, per store.

There is however also an opportunity for individual employees to score additional points. If an area or store manager recognizes that certain individuals are excelling at customer service or are performing above their job descriptions, they may alert the HR department at the Cape Town Head Office. These acts will then be allocated a

certain number of points, at the discretion of the HR department, which will again be added to the chart. Individual employees may also be awarded bonus points if they receive complimentary customer feedback that personally includes their names.

During the roll out of the intervention employees are also required to complete two staff manuals which can earn them additional points. While these manuals are developed annually, they generally cover topics such as administrative aspects, business culture, vision, strategy, health and safety and employee relations. However, each year the organisation decides to focus on specific business areas of concern which need to be emphasized, for example, stock loss. The manuals will then incorporate the organisation's policy on stock loss, ways to prevent it and other related topics. This allows the organisation to keep their employees current on business foci and simultaneously aids knowledge transfer. The manuals are to be completed and returned within a three month period after which points are awarded.

Employees are also able to check their scores throughout the year by sending a short message service (sms) to the database and receiving a message prompt. This enables staff to monitor how far they are to their target and encourages motivation to score higher points. In December of each year, all work chart points are tallied nationwide. The HR department will then select the top twenty five employees, across all 400 stores in South Africa, who have earned the most points. These individuals consequently receive a three day getaway paid for in full by the organisation.

The Programme's Organisational Plan

Figure 4 below depicts the activities involved in the composition of the staff recognition programme. It tracks the programme from its initial launch phase through to the final phase where winners are selected. The illustration also helps to map out the processes involved in the roll out of the programme, considering conceptualisation, implementation, actual and post programme activities, and how these processes are received by the target population. These activities are proposed to lead to certain benefits, namely that of improving levels of motivation among employees.

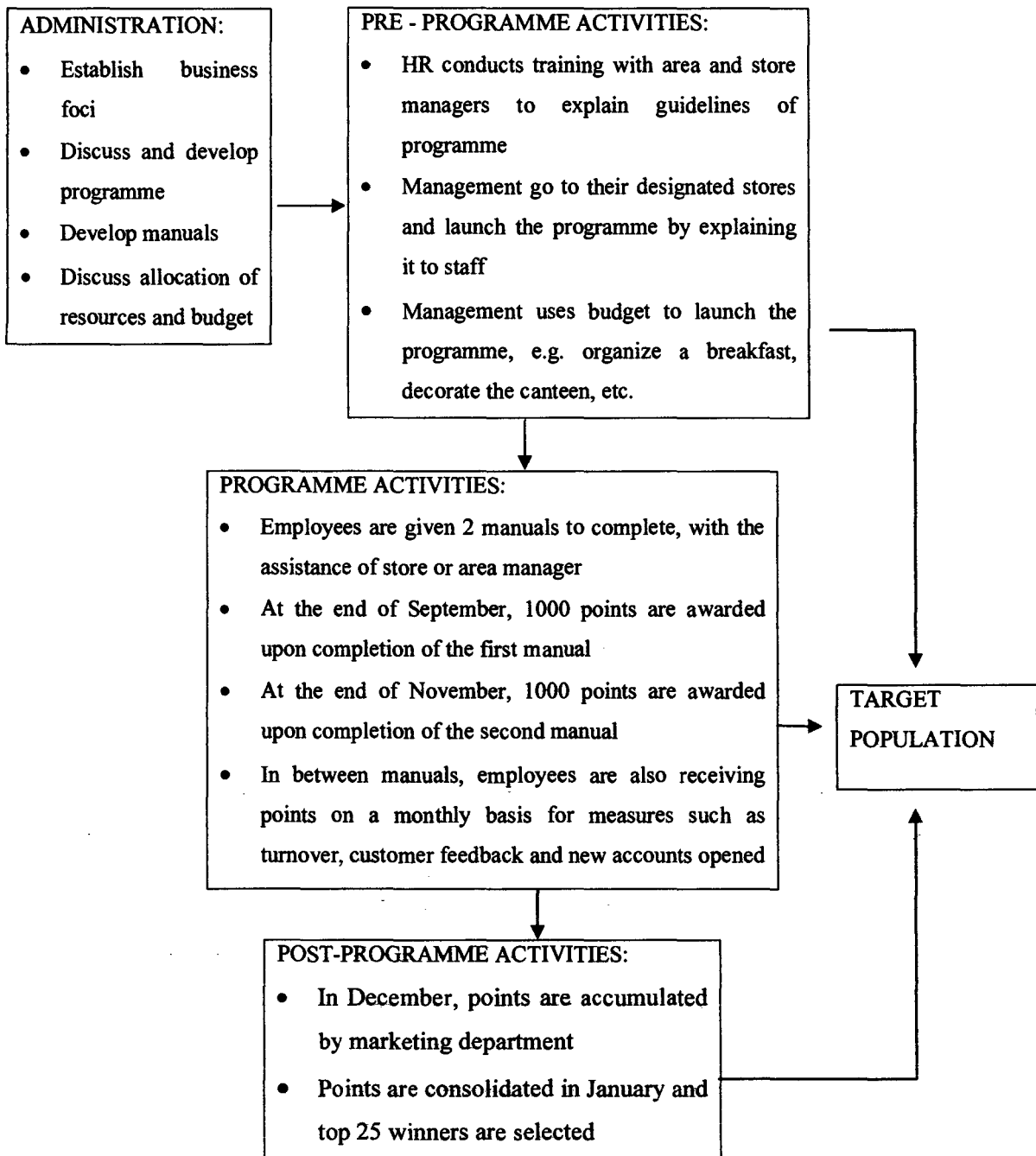


Figure 4: Organisational Plan (also known as logic model) of Programme Activities

The Programme's Service Utilisation Plan

Theory evaluations normally also include a component known as the service utilisation plan (Rossi et al, 2004). This model tracks how the intervention is proposed to be provided to the recipients and how they in turn engage with the programme. This plan can also be considered as the initiation of the change process, or the logic behind the causal or impact theory.

Area and store managers are responsible for implementing the programme successfully throughout their designated stores. In terms of implementer qualifications, store and area managers are considered suitably qualified to administer the intervention based on their years of experience and corporate knowledge of policies and organisational strategy. However, because it is compulsory for employees to participate in the programme and points are rewarded to stores regardless of individual contribution, it becomes difficult to map out how the intended recipients are interacting with the programmes service delivery system. As scores are received as store credits therefore, based on monthly store measures, winners will be selected whether or not employees are motivated to drive their own development. The service utilisation component in this programme thus appears to be very unclear.

Programme Impact

A deeper exploration of the conceptualization underlying the programme saw the following links being made (see Figure 5 below).



Figure 5: Programme Impact Theory

The descriptive assumption or the underlying logic of the programme is that the intervention, which is made up of the prescribed activities, (as illustrated in Figure 4) will lead to an increase in employee motivation, which in turn will lead to improved performance. This constitutes the causal theory underlying the intervention or in evaluation terms, the cause-and-effect sequence (Rossi et al, 2004). While motivation and improved performance are considered proximal outcomes, a distal outcome could be included as well, that of organisational profit. However, due to its ambitious nature and the fact that it moves considerably further away from the programme, it has not been included. The organisation has therefore only considered the above causal theory as relevant.

It is important to note that while the organisation considered the programme capable of achieving various other goals and objectives, such as employee retention and

improved customer service, as discussed previously, they have only considered the above links as their fundamental programme impact theory.

Issues of Evaluation

The results of this theory evaluation will be given to the HR department of the organisation involved. They have expressed interest in having the programme researched and consequently assessed or evaluated. Once the results have been reported to the HR department, it may be forwarded to the CEO, who has been an active participant in the design of the programme, as mentioned previously. The organisation has a reputation of being innovative, creative, current and constantly attuned to making improvements, wherever necessary, provided the business strategy remains aligned. The results of this evaluation will therefore be used to suggest recommendations for improvements in order to maximize the programme's logic, design and effectiveness.

Evaluation Questions

The following questions will be used as a framework in order to govern and motivate this theory evaluation. As discussed above, these questions investigate the conceptualization of various programme evaluation components.

Programme Design

- (1) Is the change process presumed in the programme theory plausible?
- (2) Are employees satisfied with the reward being offered?

Service Utilisation

- (3) Are the procedures for identifying members of the target population, delivering service to them and sustaining that service through completion well-defined and feasible?
- (4) Are the programme activities well-defined and sufficient to achieve the intended outcomes?
- (5) Are the resources allocated to the programme adequate?

Programme Impact

- (6) What are the programme's intended outcomes and are they well-defined and feasible?

These questions will guide the evaluation to a meaningful conclusion.

CHAPTER TWO

METHOD

Formative Evaluation

A formative evaluation strengthens or improves a programme by examining its delivery or technology, the quality of its implementation and the assessment of the organisational context, personnel procedures and inputs (Trochim, 2006). Formative evaluation can therefore be seen as focusing on programme process in order to evaluate the worth of a programme, while it is actually happening.

A formative evaluation can either address a specific type of evaluation or it can simply incorporate all various types of evaluations into one holistic formative evaluation. The different types of formative evaluations available are: (1) needs assessments; (2) evaluability assessments; (3) structured conceptualizations; (4) implementation evaluations; and (5) process evaluations (Trochim, 2006).

A needs assessment refers to an evaluation which determines whether the problem identified is in fact the underlying need of the organisation. An evaluability assessment assesses whether the desired evaluation is feasible. Structured conceptualization, which is also known as theory evaluation, evaluates stakeholders' conceptualization of the programme and its proposed causal links and outcomes in comparison to what is actually happening. An implementation evaluation assesses whether the programme is really being implemented as was intended. Process evaluation refers to the delivery of the programme to its intended recipients, its effectiveness and alternate delivery methods (Rossi et al, 2004).

The kind of formative evaluation chosen for this paper is that of the holistic kind. The evaluation questions, as mentioned in the previous chapter, each address a particular aspect of the programme, such as theory, design, implementation, delivery, outcomes or process. This type of evaluation was chosen based on the need to explore the programme fully and to satisfy the stakeholders' interest in the design of their programme.

Goals of a Formative Evaluation

The primary goal of a formative evaluation is to collect feedback from programme stakeholders in order to make revisions where necessary (Bhola, 1990). The advantage to this ongoing, dynamic process is that findings can be used to improve real-time programme activities and facilitate learning and effectiveness (Chappuis & Chappuis, 2008).

In collecting feedback and making revisions, a further underlying goal of formative evaluations is to provide useful feedback to the various programme stakeholders. Findings need to therefore be accurate and valid as the client often wishes to use this feedback to facilitate decision-making. Because formative evaluations require thorough research, they also help to strengthen programmes in terms of the documentation available (Nan, 2003).

In essence then, the goals of formative evaluation are: (1) to provide rapid feedback, (2) to assist in documenting the programme, and (3) to assist in planning and revising to maximize the potential of the programme.

Data Collection and Procedure

Data Providers

The data providers involved in this theory evaluation consisted of two streams of stakeholders, namely: the HRD facilitator as well as a sample of employees.

Convenience sampling was used for the evaluation, as access to stores and time availability of data providers needed to be accommodated for. In addition, various other constraints which emerged later in the evaluation process restricted data collection and procedure.

The HRD facilitator represented the organisation as a data provider, while employees represented the sample of individuals who actively participate in the programme. It is important to note that the latter sample served merely as reinforcement in order to

more accurately provide a critique of the intervention. Due to limited access constraints, as mentioned above, a sample of ten employees was available.

The sample consisted of both permanent as well as casual staff and the number composition was as follows: five permanent team members and 5 casual staff. In the sample of ten, 70% of the employees were female, while 30% were male.

Materials and Procedure

It should be noted that access to programme documentation and information was restricted six months after the evaluation had already begun. While this is later discussed in more detail under Limitations, it is for this reason that the size of the data collection and procedure is somewhat compromised, in terms of both sample size as well as access to documentation. Nonetheless, in addition to using all available programme records and documentation, interviews were conducted with the HRD facilitator and the sample of employees. In order to address each evaluation question, the relevant question and respondent is illustrated in an accompanied table, while the interview schedules are attached as Appendices A and B.

Evaluation Questions

Evaluation Question 1: Plausibility of the Change Process

The data gathered here provided information as to whether the idealized cause-and-effect logic was indeed both plausible and valid. It also assisted in determining whether there was evidence to support the proposed underlying impact theory. In doing so, it may be determined whether the "...assumed links and relationships actually occur" (Rossi et al, 2004). In order to answer this question, a formal interview was conducted with the HRD facilitator.

Table 1: Evaluation Question 1

Participant:	Question:
HRD Facilitator	Is the change process presumed in the programme theory plausible?

Evaluation Question 2: Employee Reward Satisfaction

Both the HRD facilitator as well as the sample of employees were interviewed in order to answer this question. The purpose underlying this question was to establish whether there was consensus with regards to the reward. This premise is reinforced by best practice of reward and recognition schemes, which postulates that rewards must be meaningful and resonate with each individual in order to motivate, as mentioned previously.

Table 2: Evaluation Question 2

Participant:	Question:
HRD Facilitator	Do you feel the employees are satisfied with the reward being offered?
Employees	Do you know what the incentive for the programme is and are you satisfied with it?

Evaluation Question 3: Feasibility of service identification, delivery and maintenance

This question was asked of both data providers in order to establish whether there was a shared perspective with regards to service rollout, delivery and the maintenance thereof. Disparities reflect poor theoretical assumptions.

Table 3: Evaluation Question 3

Participant:	Question:
HRD Facilitator	Are the procedures for identifying members of the target population, delivering services to them and sustaining that service through completion well-defined and feasible?
Employees	Are the procedures for identifying members of the target population, delivering services to them and sustaining that service through completion well-defined and feasible?

Evaluation Question 4: Characteristics of Programme Activities

This question was also asked of both sets of data providers in order to establish whether there was a perceived link between activities and the programme's overall

goal. It also helped to determine whether the activities were understood and supported by employees, as perceived by employees.

Table 4: Evaluation Question 4

Participant:	Question:
HRD Facilitator	Are the procedures for identifying members of the target population, delivering services to them and sustaining that service through completion well-defined and feasible?
Employees	Are the procedures for identifying members of the target population, delivering services to them and sustaining that service through completion well-defined and feasible?

Evaluation Question 5: Adequacy of Resource Allocation

This question was asked only of the HRD facilitator in order to establish whether the programme was facilitated or hindered through the allocation of resources. The proposed allocation of resources also highlighted whether there was an unrealistic theoretical expectation of resources, which ultimately undermines the inherent programme theory.

Table 5: Evaluation Question 5

Participant:	Question:
HRD Facilitator	Is the change process presumed in the programme theory plausible?

Evaluation Question 6: Feasibility of Programme Outcomes

This question was asked of both the HRD facilitator as well as the sample of employees in order to determine whether there was consensus as to what the programme aims to achieve and how well these are understood and perceived to be feasible. This question also helped to establish whether the proposed programme theory specified outcomes that were realistic in both nature and scope.

Table 6: Evaluation Question 6

Participant:	Question:
HRD Facilitator	What are the programme's intended outcomes and do you feel that they are well-defined and feasible?
Employees	What are the programme's intended outcomes and do you feel that they are well-defined and feasible?

Once the interview responses were collected, common themes were extracted for each question in order to highlight similarities or discrepancies in each response. These common themes were then compared to what was originally proposed in the programme theory.

CHAPTER THREE

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The first part of this chapter presents results in the form of answering the different evaluation questions, provided in Chapter One, followed by the relevant discussion thereof. Due to the nature of the theory evaluation, the results are qualitatively reported and discussed, using common thematic extraction. These results were obtained from the HRD facilitator as well as the sample of ten employees. The second part of this chapter will measure the staff recognition programme against the generally accepted standard for successful reward and recognition schemes, as discussed in Chapter One.

Programme Design

Evaluation Question 1:

Question 1 which enquired about the causal theory, was only asked of the HRD facilitator as she is familiar with the programme's design. She responded positively about the plausibility of the causal programme theory, due to the programme's previous successes using the same causal theory. The quote below illustrates this:

"...our previous success proves that the programme motivates staff, drives development, and helps to retain employees....so yes, I do think that this programme motivates staff and improves their performance. This is definitely plausible."

With regards to the causal theory underlying the programme and whether or not it is plausible, it was expected that the HRD facilitator, who is actively involved in the design of the programme, would be enthusiastic and confident about the causal logic. This is due to the fact that as a stakeholder she has a vested interest in the programme. As noted above, her response with regards to the underlying causal theory seems to be based on a perception of previous success and should therefore be considered as being potentially prone to social desirability. It does, however, indicate the organisational perception of the underlying causal theory.

Literature suggests that while reward and recognition programmes aim to attract, retain and motivate employees; encourage or reinforce behaviour that will ultimately benefit the organisation; and significantly improve performance and productivity; they may need to incorporate specific elements in order to be successful, such as a customised approach; considering the nature of the reward; and conducting a cost-benefit analysis and so forth (Armstrong, 2003; DeWitt, 2001; Morrall, 1996). Thus, while the causal theory may indeed be plausible, the responses collected from the sample of employees will determine whether these elements have been incorporated into the programme, in order to render it more successful and effective. These responses are analysed below.

Evaluation Question 2:

Question 2 asked participants whether they knew what the reward/incentive for the programme was and whether they were happy with this reward. Only the HRD facilitator responded positively in this regard:

"...employees love the incentive and are extremely motivated to win it...we use the three day get away to really treat them and make them feel special and previous winners have loved the trips..."

All ten employees, however, criticized the choice of incentive. The following extracts illustrate this:

"...they fly everyone to Cape Town, take them to the company head office, Table Mountain and a restaurant...this is stuff I can do on my own time and at my own leisure, so I don't see why others get flown down while I must stay here. It's always the small stores that win anyway."

"...they take you to head office and to see the sights...I think that's pathetic. I can do that in my own spare time. I wouldn't want to win that...what's to achieve?"

"...it's a getaway in Cape Town to do things I've already done. Can't they give us more options that we actually want to win?"

"...you win a holiday in Cape Town...they should put more effort in their rewards."

"...a three day getaway...but to me Table Mountain is nothing special. Why can't they ask me what I want to do?"

"...the reward is three days in Cape Town. This is not motivating for people who live in Cape Town."

"...I'm not sure what it is but I know you get to do things in Cape Town, like go to Table Mountain. I can take myself to Table Mountain, even if I am just a casual."

"...the winners get to go sight seeing in Cape Town for three days. I am not happy about this because if you are one of the winners, it means that you have really worked hard for the company. Why can't they offer you a better salary rather or allow you to apply for more senior positions? Look at how many people work there...this is not a reward."

"...I don't know what the reward is..."

"...I think the reward changes slightly each year, but even so it is insignificant because you stay in Cape Town and this does not motivate me at all."

The incentive used to motivate employees is an essential component in designing a successful reward and recognition programme (Armstrong, 2003). The incentive may be either intrinsic or extrinsic, but this should be dependent on the individual's perception of that reward (Jensen et al, 2007). Judging from the employee responses, their perceptions of the incentive have not been considered and consequently, it appears that 100% of the sample do not identify with the reward being offered, nor do they feel incentivised to achieve any intended outcomes. From the responses, the sample appear to show great disdain for the ultimate reward, which appears to be a key programme design flaw.

In addition, there was no clear consensus as to what exactly the incentive was. Although most of the sample was aware that the reward was a three day getaway in Cape Town, not many responses reflected confidence as to what this getaway entailed.

Conclusion: Programme Design

The design of the programme appears to be flawed in that the underlying causal theory has not been proven as accurate, valid or reliable, based on interview responses as well as analyses which measure the programme against the generally accepted standard. The proposed causal theory was not developed according to any literature, advice, or through a needs analysis. It was in fact, informally developed by organisational stakeholders, who thought to leverage existing staff through the implementation of an incentive scheme. It seems therefore that levels of motivation was assumed as the problem, although conducting a needs analysis might have suggested alternative explanations. This conclusion reflects the programme theory and design as being potentially weak and inconsistent. When employees are unaware of what the ultimate prize is, it creates disparities and gaps in reaching programme success. This sort of design flaw undermines both the underlying programme theory as well as the programme's potential to be effective.

Furthermore, the programme is a reward and recognition scheme which has built its causal logic on the foundation of a particular incentive. However, when it is established that this incentive is in fact ineffective, it greatly affects the programme's design and conceptualisation and impacts on both the feasibility as well as sustainability of implementing this programme in the long term.

In addition, in terms of eliciting programme theory, it is evident that the staff recognition intervention has an implicit programme theory (Rossi et al, 2004). This is because the link between programme activities and motivation has not been eloquently defined. As such, a discrepancy in programme logic is evident as it is hard to evaluate whether programme activities (cause) are tangibly motivating staff to perform better (effect). This constitutes a fundamental design flaw.

Service Utilisation

Evaluation Question 3:

In response to this question, all ten employees agreed that the procedures for identifying members of the target population, delivering service to them and sustaining that service through completion was neither well-defined nor sufficient. This directly challenged the HRD facilitator's response to this same question. Most employees responded that the programme had not been successfully delivered to them, as is evident from the following quotes:

"...they don't identify anybody and to be honest, it's not delivered at all...maybe it's because I worked the late shift that day..."

"...how can delivery be well-defined or sufficient if I don't know anything about it and I've been working there for 2 years now?"

"...nobody explained anything to me...I sort of found out via the grapevine when I saw the chart on the wall..."

"...when you start late in the year, I think they just forget about you..."

Other employees berated the delivery of the programme, stating that it was introduced but the delivery of the service failed to be sustained. This is evident below:

"...you only hear about the programme when it starts [in June] and never again and then you just see points magically appearing..."

"...I know about the programme, but I don't understand how they award points. Every time your points increase, but I don't know why. They don't even give you feedback ..."

In terms of service delivery and sustainability from the beginning till the completion of the programme, it is clear that the programme is not being implemented as

intended. This is evident from the strong responses from all ten employees who criticize the service delivery component of the programme.

Contrary to the HRD facilitator, not all staff members are experiencing the programme as intended. This is a serious implication which ultimately affects the effectiveness of the programme and its intended impact on performance, motivation and customer service.

In addition, those employees who are familiar with the programme do not seem to understand the way the programme is intended to work. The basis of the programme, which is the points system, does not appear to be well-defined or maintained. Employees are not aware of how points are awarded and this should be very concerning. Given this, the following question is raised: How does the programme expect to incentivise individuals and reinforce positive behaviours as intended?

It is also apparent that while some employees may be experiencing the programme, delivery of the programme is not being sustained through completion. In terms of implementation, there appears to be large inconsistencies in programme delivery. This implies that while the programme targets all staff, delivery is not implemented efficiently.

Evaluation Question 4:

The fourth question which dealt with how programme activities were defined and their role in achieving outcomes was also met with varied responses. The HRD facilitator was positive in her response to the framework of the activities and how they related to the programme's outcomes, stating that:

"...these activities are drawn up to help employees perform more effectively and have been quite successful over the years..."

However, while six out of ten employees agreed that the activities were well-defined and easy to do, most employees responded negatively about these activities' relevance to achieving any of the outcomes. The following quotes illustrate this:

"...the activities make you look stupid. They give you these MCQs with nonsensical options. The manuals are forced on you, but every year they ask the same questions. I don't see how that will make me a top performer...so no, they are not sufficient to achieve the goals."

"...the activities don't make any sense. Staff don't even fill in the books and yet they get points. How is that supposed to achieve anything?"

"...the activities are stupid and pointless and only achieve one thing – undermining us..."

"...nobody has time to fill in these books especially because they're unrelated to the goals..."

"...how can they be sufficient to achieve anything if your manager gives you all the answers anyway?"

"...I've never been given a manual to complete, so I can't comment..."

Alternatively, there are those employees who felt that the activities are indeed sufficient to achieve outcomes such as motivating staff and excelling at customer service; however, they felt this was dependent on the individual. These employees responded in the following way:

"...they could be sufficient to achieve the outcomes, but that depends on the person completing the activities..."

"...I enjoy the activities because it really helps to refresh me about policies and procedures that I may have forgotten..."

"...they can help to achieve the goals if you complete the manuals as you should. It helps me."

The programme activities appear to be a controversial element in terms of what it aims to achieve and what is actually being perceived by employees. While the HRD facilitator and 40% of the sample found the programme activities to be relevant in achieving the outcomes; a 60% majority of employees felt that the activities were pointless, undermined them and did not help to achieve the intended outcomes in any way.

While the activities are supposed to encourage a transfer of learning and employees are awarded points upon their completion, it is clear that not all activities are being delivered as intended. This impacts on the value of the activities and its ability to assist employees in achieving the intended outcomes. This is particularly evident from the one response which states that managers give employees all the answers to the manuals. Undoubtedly, the programme was not designed in a way that allowed managers to do this. This indicates that again, the programme and its activities are not being implemented as intended.

Evaluation Question 5:

This question was only asked of the HRD facilitator as she is directly involved in the design and roll out of the programme, as opposed to the employees, who receive the programme.

The HRD facilitator emphasised that resources, in terms of time, money, training and delivery of the programme were indeed adequate, especially due to the success of the programme, based on preceding years. Her response reiterates this view:

"...we have allocated more than enough time and finances for the programme. We hold training workshops to train store and area managers on how to deliver the programme and a lot of money is spent on marketing the programme. We have a huge function every year at head office to introduce it and it has been extremely successful so far."

The HRD facilitator's response positively describes the adequacy and allocation of resources to the programme. However, I was not able to access any formal

documentation with regards to resources allocated and spent on the programme, due to confidentiality issues with the organisation.

Conclusion: Service Utilisation

Service delivery and programme maintenance appear to be poor reflections of what was originally intended. This poor service delivery component suggests that the programme is failing in reaching its target audience, which is an essential, non-negotiable step in the process. Flaws in programme delivery imply that the quality and effectiveness of the programme are being compromised, which should also be seriously considered. A failure to deliver and maintain the programme will impact on the intended achievement of goals and objectives. No consensus has been reached as to whether programme activities lead to intended outcomes and the adequacy of resources has been based on past successes, not on a cost-benefit analysis, which may have been worthwhile to conduct.

Programme Impact

Evaluation Question 6:

Responses to Question 6 varied across the HRD facilitator and sample of employees. Seven out of ten employees agreed that the outcome of the programme was to improve customer service. This particular outcome was confirmed by the HRD facilitator, in her response to the same question. Remaining responses varied, as illustrated in the following quotes:

“...the programme aims to motivate staff to excel at customer service, to retain employees, and to drive self-development...”

“...to motivate staff, to lower theft and prevent stock loss...”

“...to help manage yourself...”

“...to motivate employees to work better...”

Motivation was also confirmed by the HRD facilitator as a proximal outcome. However, in terms of outcomes being well-defined and feasible, there was no consensus between the HRD facilitator and the sample of employees. Eight out of ten employees agreed that the outcomes were not well-defined as can be seen in the following responses:

“...no...nobody’s ever told me about the programme...”

“...not at all...I’ve never been told about how the programme works, what its outcomes or incentives are...”

“...not all of it because most of the things they award you for, you don’t even know where it comes from...”

“...no...nobody explains anything...you just see a chart on the wall...”

Contrary to this, the HRD facilitator and two employees felt that the outcomes are indeed well-defined, as can be seen below:

“...the programme’s outcomes are well-defined and it has been running successfully for a few years...”

“...yeah, they do define it, but maybe they could go into more detail for some of us...”

“...well-defined? I think they are...”

In terms of the feasibility of outcomes, all ten employees agreed that the outcomes were possible to achieve, in agreement with the HRD facilitator’s response. However, some of their responses indicated concerns about the programme and looked as follows:

“...they are feasible but they change the rules all the time to try and make it harder for you to reach those goals...”

“...they would be feasible if the incentive was good enough...”

“...they could be achieved if we knew for definite what they were...”

From the results it is evident that 70% of the sample agreed that the intended outcome of the programme was to improve customer service. However, the remaining 30% identified other outcomes, such as motivating staff, self-management, and the prevention of stock loss and theft. While these outcomes may indeed be as intended, the variance in responses highlights that employees are not clear as to what exactly the programme aims to achieve. This directly affects the programme's impact and effectiveness in achieving its intended outcomes.

Secondly, 80% of the sample responded that these intended outcomes were not well-defined. This is clear from the previous result, which identifies confusion and disparity in the identification of intended outcomes. Responses suggest that the outcomes were not discussed with employees, and while it may have been rolled out, delivery has been poor, affecting the impact of the programme's intended aims and objectives. This is true of the programme documents which make very little reference to articulating goals and outcomes.

Conclusion: Programme Impact

Programme outcomes have not been clearly communicated to staff and thus cannot be well-defined, which in turn impacts on their supposed feasibility, in the sense that employees are not clear as to what they are striving to achieve. As linked to the literature in Chapter One, understanding goal setting is an important step in the process of achieving them. Not stating clearly therefore what the intended outcomes are seems to further undermine the proposed programme theory and its intended success. The programme appears then to have an insignificant impact on the intended goals and outcomes.

Analysis Against the Standard

This section will measure the staff recognition intervention against what is considered as best practices for successful reward and recognition schemes.

Different Factors Motivate Different People

As discussed in Chapter One, reward and recognition schemes are successful when they account for the idea that employees need to value the reward being offered. From the responses gathered through the employee interview, it is apparent that none of the sample participants valued the reward or felt motivated by it to increase their performance. Some responses indicated that they would prefer intrinsic rewards (e.g. the opportunity to develop their careers in the organisation), or more relevant extrinsic rewards (e.g. increased pay). This suggests that individuals are at varying stages in the need hierarchy and the reward therefore, does not make provision for this. The implication is that the programme has not been designed according to a key best practice guideline, which may according to literature, not only undermine the programme's effectiveness, but in fact, decrease employees' motivation levels, as discussed in Chapter One. A standard reward that appears unclear and seems not to resonate with employees may contribute to the constraints of control and perceptions of competencies.

Supportive Organisational Culture

From this vantage point, it is unclear as to what the organisational culture is like and whether or not it supports a customer service focused reward and recognition scheme. However, judging from the responses and the ambiguity surrounding the intervention, it does not appear that there are clear channels of communication present in all levels of the organisation. This is reinforced by the fact that the programme is currently running in its fifth year, suggesting therefore that there may indeed be a lack of support in the broader organisational context, as employees are still unaware of the rewards and measures (even after five years). However, this may not be entirely generalised in identifying the nature of the organisational culture, as the responses are specific to the programme.

Strategic Objective Alignment

The intervention does appear to be aligned with the organisation's strategic objectives as it is intended to improve customer service, increase motivation and reduce turnover. Whether these objectives will be met however, does not detract from the idea that the programme has been designed in order to address organisational goals and strategy. As a retail force in the trade industry, these objectives appear to be relevant, realistic and geared towards greater organisational success.

Measurable Performance Indicators

The interviews conducted suggest that employees are aware of how points can be earned, but are uncertain as to how these points are allocated. According to best practice, performance indicators should be clear and unambiguous (Benardin, 2003). However, based on the responses it would seem that employees are unsure as to the technical details of the points system. One particular response alluded to the fact that only smaller stores have ever achieved the rewards, suggesting therefore that the point system is neither fair nor consistent; a key design flaw. This element undermines the programme's theory once again as it presents a breakdown in communication and a lack of direction, which impacts on the levels of motivation and creates disparities in the proposed causal theory.

Reward Instrumentality

Successful schemes are those in which employees understand and believe that their excellent performance will lead to rewards. In this reward and recognition programme employees are not confident that this is indeed true. Based on the poor service delivery and implementation components of the programme, it is suggested that employees do not fully believe in the intervention, nor in the fact that they stand a chance to win should they successfully perform. This may have a momentous impact on the levels of employee motivation which again, undermines the programme's causal theory.

Goal Setting

While the intervention does indicate what employees will be measured against, in terms of turnover, customer feedback and number of new accounts opened; the programme has failed to highlight specific goals with regards to these measures.

Employees therefore are not aware of how much turnover should be generated or the numbers of new accounts required to be opened before they will be awarded points. Thus, while broad general goals have been identified, the programme has failed to ensure that these goals are focused, reasonable, measurable, participatory, neutral, challenging, achievable and provide feedback. If the goals do indeed meet these criteria, it suggests that the programme has failed to communicate this to the employees actively participating in the intervention. This will have far-reaching consequences for programme effectiveness, employee motivation and ultimately, performance.

Out of the six guidelines facilitating the success of reward and recognition schemes, the staff recognition programme has only managed to follow one, in that they have developed goals aligned with the organisation's strategy. However, this suggests fundamental programme flaws in feasibility, conceptualization, design, implementation, effectiveness and impact. This should concern programme design staff and encourage a review of the intervention.

CHAPTER FOUR

LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this chapter is two-fold: firstly, it discusses the limitations of the evaluation, identifying constraints and challenges that may have arisen; and secondly, it suggests recommendations for improvement, identifying recommendations that stakeholders may use to improve the programme in future, across all elements.

Limitations of the Evaluation

Confidentiality Clause

First, a confidentiality clause that was later introduced by the stakeholders during the evaluation may have impacted the stakeholder interview as questions were not always answered directly nor did they completely satisfy or address what was being asked. For example, the stakeholder was not able to provide information as to what the actual programme incentive was, suggesting that it could be considered as a breach of intellectual matter and strategy. This late unexpected confidentiality clause during the evaluation could not have been foreseen or accommodated for.

Time Constraints

Secondly, the evaluation was limited by time constraints. Due to the nature of the evaluation, programme description and theory was dependent on the availability and willingness of the HRD facilitator. However, because of her extremely busy schedule, the evaluation was conducted under severe time limits, in terms of her availability to assist and provide data.

Access Permission

Thirdly, also due to the confidentiality clause, the stakeholder did not grant permission for official programme records to be accessed, as was originally intended and discussed. The evaluation could not therefore provide any official documentation to substantiate claims made by the HRD facilitator, which was unforeseen.

Limited Research Sample

Fourthly, the scope of this evaluation was limited due to time and accessibility, in terms of a research sample. The sample obtained for this evaluation was very small and may not have been representative of the intended target population. Based on accessibility to stores, participants were only sourced from two stores. This being said, the sample was included here in order to reinforce the thematic extraction and should not be considered in isolation but rather as an accompaniment to the analysis against the standard, as per issues of generalisability (Durrheim & Painter, 2006).

Limited Engagement

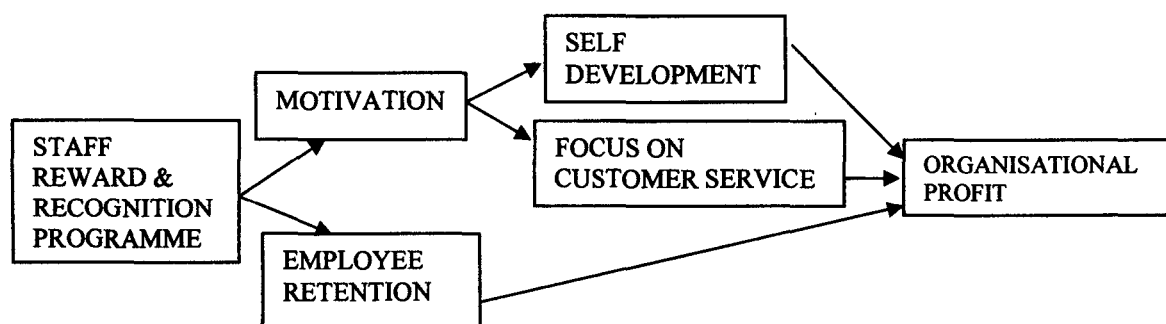
Tied to the above limitation, a fifth limitation was that although the evaluation attempted to investigate the underlying theory across various components in the programme's logic model, there was very little access to engage with these components, such as implementation, service delivery and so forth. Measuring the programme against best practice and analysing common thematic extraction was therefore deemed as most appropriate and achievable.

Recommendations for Improving the Programme

Theory Review

Due to the significant impact of reward and recognition schemes on motivation and performance, it is suggested that the programme theory be reviewed and perhaps, even reconstructed to ensure that it is indeed plausible. This could be done with the assistance of a qualified Monitoring and Evaluation Officer. Based on the results and discussions in Chapter Three, many programme components appear to be unknowingly undermining the proposed theory. In order to improve this, the programme theory should be developed in alignment with programme activities and elements in order to ensure holistic integration.

It would also be recommended that perhaps the causal theory be reviewed as well. This is due to the difficulty in measuring outcomes that have been stated, but have failed to be included in the impact theory, as according to the organisation. A proposed programme impact could potentially look as follows:



These causal links make provision for all the outcomes, as postulated by the HRD facilitator.

Conduct Needs Analysis

Secondly, a recommendation would be to conduct a formal needs analysis in order to determine exactly what the challenges and problems may be, before investing in an programme of this magnitude. A needs analysis could also provide valuable insight into assisting with the first recommendation, in terms of reviewing causal theory. Because it was assumed that motivation was the problem which needed to be addressed, this could have limited the scope of the programme, in terms of what it should achieve. The recommended needs analysis should therefore definitely make accommodation for the presence of extraneous variables or factors that may be impeding outstanding performance, rather than considering motivation as the only cause.

Understand What Motivates People

A third recommendation would be to try and understand the need levels of the employees working in each store; a task which could easily be facilitated by store managers. Once this information is collected, stakeholders should invest in a quality programme design team to develop an intervention that is linked to the organisation's strategy but is also tailored to the needs and desires which motivate staff at all levels, employing both intrinsic as well as extrinsic rewards. This recommendation is directly linked to best practice, which requires successful recognition and reward schemes to make provision for the fact that that different people are motivated by different things.

Conduct Pilot Intervention

A fourth recommendation would be to conduct a pilot intervention that would be able to scope the elements and resources required to develop and implement a successful intervention. The pilot programme would be able to identify challenges, obstacles, weak points and disparities in ideal theory and real world practice with the intention of rectifying and improving for future.

Consensus about Goals and Objectives

A fifth recommendation is for management to ensure that all levels of subordinate staff understand the goals, objectives, activities and components of the programme in order to effectively participate in it. In addition, they should encourage that consensus be reached as to what the intervention is about. It is possible that employee input may even assist in the development of programme components, such as training manuals, the point system, and so forth.

Conduct an Implementation Evaluation

An implementation evaluation should also be conducted in order to assess if the programme is being implemented as intended. This should help to address the implementation issues and poor service delivery component. Because a key problem is that the programme cannot measure whether employees are in fact participating or not, due to its compulsory nature, the implementation evaluation should be designed in such a way that this data will be available in order to measure programme success.

Encourage a Supportive Culture

The organisation should encourage a supportive culture where teamwork, co-operation and communication are considered as integral to success. This will help to reinforce the intervention and facilitate consensual understanding and focus. The programme should be advocated throughout the organisation in order to encourage support for it. A recommendation would therefore be to include senior management in the programme, as part of the retail teams, in order to highlight its significance and foster greater levels of engagement.

Stipulate Performance Measures

The programme also needs to clearly stipulate performance measures, i.e. how employees will be assessed and how they will be rewarded. These measures should be fair, consistent and measurable. This should aid in fostering support and buy-in for the programme and contribute to its success. Clear performance measures should be able to provide employees with greater context, direction and focus on achieving specific goals.

Implement Monitoring and Evaluation System

A final recommendation would be to implement solid monitoring and evaluation systems that will be able to determine whether objectives are being achieved; whether processes are being adhered to; and whether any progress is being made in terms of the causal theory laid out.

These systems should be implemented and monitored regularly as feedback may be processed and implemented for improvement for future use.

In essence, it may be beneficial to outsource a professional programme designer to help redesign the programme according to best practices and in the context of the organisation as well as the retail fashion industry.

Evaluation Contribution

This formative theory evaluation sought to assess the conceptualisation underlying the programme theory, design, implementation and service delivery, effectiveness and impact. From this assessment, certain recommendations were suggested in order to improve the programme, across these programme elements in order to provide stakeholders with an attempt at a more effective and feasible, programme theory.

It is hoped that this evaluation will be able to contribute to the limited literature available on theory evaluations in the area of employee reward and recognition programmes. While there is a vast amount of literature pertaining to reward programmes and their effects on intrinsic motivation, there are few academic writings

which focus on extrinsic rewards and motivation, and even less on theory evaluations for the very same.

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APPENDIX A

Interview Schedule for the HRD Facilitator

- (1) Is the change process presumed in the programme theory plausible?
- (2) Do you feel the employees are satisfied with the reward being offered?
- (3) Are the procedures for identifying members of the target population, delivering service to them and sustaining that service through completion well-defined and sufficient?
- (4) Are the programme activities well-defined and sufficient to achieve the intended goals?
- (5) Do you believe that the resources allocated to the programme are adequate?
- (6) What are the programme's intended outcomes and do you feel that they are well-defined and feasible?

APPENDIX B

Interview Schedule for Sample of Employees

- (1) Do you know what the incentive for the programme is and are you satisfied with it?
- (2) Are the procedures for identifying members of the target population, delivering service to them and sustaining that service through completion well-defined and sufficient?
- (3) Are the programme activities well-defined and sufficient to achieve the intended goals?
- (4) What are the programme's intended outcomes and do you feel that they are well-defined and feasible?